



## Understanding Michigan's Cohort Graduation and Dropout Rates

The release of graduation rates for the class of 2009 marks the third time that Michigan has used a cohort four-year graduation rate. In order to comply with the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001*, Michigan moved to an accountability system in which a graduation rate includes only "on-time" graduates who earn regular diplomas within four years of entering high school. This calculation meets the guidelines provided by the National Governors Association (NGA) Graduation Counts Compact for calculation of such rates. As more and more states implement the NGA standard, state-to-state comparisons will become more meaningful.

The formula for the calculation of 2009 graduation rates is possible because school districts have been tracking the enrollment of individual students since those students first enrolled in the 9th grade in the 2005-2006 school year and reporting that data to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). The gathering of this information at a statewide level allows CEPI to help districts adjust enrollments to reflect "transfers in" and "transfers out" of the district, as well as students who exit from the public education system itself, over the course of four years.

2009 marks the second year that five-year graduation and dropout rates are calculated for students in the prior cohort. The graduation rate includes the students who were categorized as "off-track" at the end of four years and graduated in the fifth year with a regular high school diploma.

### The Cohort Four-Year Graduation Rate

#### **How is the 2009 cohort four-year graduation rate determined?**

The 2009 cohort four-year graduation rate is calculated by tracking individual students who enrolled for the first time in 9th grade in the 2005-2006 school year. These students are assigned to the 2009 cohort. Using the cohort method allows the state to more accurately track student movement over time. It accounts for students who leave school during one year and return in another, and it can account for students who are retained in a grade but stay in school and graduate later than their classmates.

The total number of students who were identified as first-time 9th graders in fall 2005 formed the initial 2009 cohort. Students who transferred into the state, district, or building at any time during the four-year period were added to the initial group. For students who moved within the public schools, student records were updated to reflect the correct district and building location. These students were considered "transfers out" of the district/building they left and "transfers in" to the district/building they entered. Students who exited the public school system entirely (out of state, to non-public school, or home school) or became deceased at any time during the four-year period are considered "exempt" and removed from the cohort.

To calculate the 2009 cohort four-year graduation rate, all students are placed into one of four categories:

1. On-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less
2. Other completer - earned a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, other certificate, or reached special education maximum age
3. Off-track (graduated & continuing) - completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years, or did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school

4. Dropout - left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown

### **Calculating the 2009 cohort four-year graduation rate**

A student is counted toward the graduation rate of the final building or district that the student attended during the four-year period. "On-track graduated" is counted as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories. The total of the status categories is the 2009 Cohort Total. Students who transferred in are included as students with one of the four statuses for that building/district and students who transferred out have been included in another public entity's rates, if the students have been located.

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated}}{\text{2009 Cohort Total}}$$

### **Understanding the 2009 cohort four-year graduation rate report**

The 2009 cohort four-year graduation rate report contains buildings/districts when students are educated in any high school grades (9th-12th) or when their ages are 14 or older (i.e., students who are eligible to graduate from high school). There are two calculation rules that may result in building rates not summing to district rates, and district rates not summing to state rates:

1. **Court Ordered Facilities:** Buildings in which students who have been ordered by the court to attend are not included in the district's rate, only the building's rate.
2. **"Count Dates":** Michigan collects data on students twice a year on "count dates" (one day in September and one in February) for the purposes of calculating state school aid payments and for required state and federal reporting. Students attending on count day are reported as continuing in the district during a fall or spring submission. Accommodations are made for students who do attend school but were absent on count day (e.g., if a child has an excused absence on count day, he/she must return within 30 school days; if an unexcused absence occurs, the student must return in 10 school days, etc.). In order to ensure that the graduation rate calculation aligns with the MDE's full academic year requirement outlined in the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, students must be in attendance in a building for at least two count dates (consecutive or not) to be included in that building's calculation. Students must be in attendance at a district for at least one count date to be included in a district's calculations. Students who are enrolled but did not attend on the count dates within the district are only counted in the state rate.

Count Dates Present	Accountability
0	State rate only
1	District and State
2 or more	Building, District and State

### **Reading the 2009 cohort four-year graduation rate report**

The graduation report includes data for the state, every district, and every building from which students graduate and is divided into ten columns. The columns include:

**Table 1**

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	This is the alphabetical listing, beginning with local education agencies (LEAs), and then public school academies (PSAs), of the districts and buildings included in the report. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that comprise the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2005	Total number of students who were identified as first-time 9th graders in fall 2005, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2009 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district, or building at any time during the four-year period and remained there.
(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of students who transferred out of the district, building, or public school system (out of state, to non-public school, or home-school) at any time during the four-year period and did not return. Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort for the state, for each district, and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out, and exempt students.
On-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER; missing expected records).
Off-Track (Graduated & Continuing)	Total number of students who completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years, or did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a GED, other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated divided by the 2009 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.

A cell containing "< 10" indicates there were more than zero and less than ten total students in the cohort or in a status at the building for two count days or the district for one count day. It is possible to have "< 10" even though the first-time 9<sup>th</sup> grader, transfers in, and transfers out columns have a zero total. This is due to the fact that cohort students now in the building/district for at least two count days are categorized as "exempt."

## The Cohort Four-Year Dropout Rate

### How is the 2009 cohort four-year dropout rate determined?

**There is no national standard for calculating cohort four-year dropout rates.** Michigan has chosen to maintain consistency by using the cohort methodology recommended by NGA to calculate this rate as well.

The 2009 cohort four-year dropout rate is calculated by tracking individual students who enrolled for the first time in 9th grade in the 2005-2006 school year (assigned to the 2009 cohort) and left high school

permanently at any time during the four-year period prior to receiving a regular diploma, GED, or other completion certificate.

A dropout rate is not equivalent to subtracting the graduation rate from 100 percent because that method would count students who are an "other completer" or "off-track continuing" as dropouts. Other completers are students who earned a GED, certificate, or reached special education maximum age. Students with an off-track continuing cohort status are those who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.

To calculate the 2009 cohort four-year dropout rate, all students are placed into the same four categories used to determine graduation rates: on-track graduated, other completer, off-track (graduated & continuing), and dropout.

### **Calculating the 2009 cohort four-year dropout rate**

"Dropouts" is counted as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories. The total of the status categories is the 2009 Cohort Total:

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{\text{2009 Cohort Total}}$$

Some schools in Michigan offer 9th, 9th-10th, and 9th-11th grade campuses, from which students do not graduate, and thus, do not have a cohort complete four years. The cohort total for the buildings that do not graduate students is determined by the number of students who were reported at the building for two or more count days who may have transferred out of the building but did not transfer out of the district by the time they were last reported. This total was only computed for buildings that did not report any graduates. To calculate which building is accountable for a student relative to dropout rates, here are some examples where the student attended for at least two count dates:

- If "**Student A**" dropped out while attending a 9th grade building, the student would only be included in this building's dropout rate, as the student did not attend any 10th-12th grade building.
- If "**Student B**" attended a 9th grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th grade building, but eventually dropped out, this student would be included in both building's dropout rates.
- If "**Student C**" attended a 9th grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th grade building where the student was reported as off-track (graduated or continuing) or an other completer, this student would not be included in any building's dropout rate, as this student did not dropout.
- If "**Student D**" transferred into the district to a 10th-12th grade building and dropped out, this student would only be included in the 10th-12th grade building's dropout rate, as the student did not attend any 9th grade building.
- If "**Student E**" attended a 9th grade building and continued on to a 10th-12th grade building, transferred to another district, and then dropped out, the previous district would not include this student in the dropout rate, because this student is included in the new district's dropout rate.

**Table 2**

Dropout Rate Accountable Entity for Non-Graduating Buildings					
	Building	Cohort Status	Building	Cohort Status	Accountable Building
Student A	9th grade	Dropout	N/A	N/A	9th grade
Student B	9th grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th grade	Dropout	Both
Student C	9th grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th grade	Off-track (graduated or continuing) or Other Completer	N/A
Student D	N/A	N/A	10th-12th grade	Dropout	10th-12th grade
Student E	9th grade	On-track or Off-track Continuing	10th-12th grade in another district	Dropout	10th-12th grade in the other district

It is also important to know the difference between a one-year incidence/event rate and a cohort four-year rate. CEPI calculates both depending on reporting needs. These two calculations are very different numbers and measure very different things. The cohort rate measures the success of the public school system overall. For example, one district may fail to meet the needs of a student resulting in that student dropping out. However, that student can re-enroll elsewhere. The cohort four-year rate is calculated at the end of four years; thus, not counting that student as a dropout. Whereas in the event rate, a student can drop out of high school and re-enroll in multiple districts multiple times. Under this calculation, the student would be counted in each district for that respective count day. This one-year event rate measures an individual district's success with a student for a count day only.

### **Understanding the 2009 cohort four-year dropout rate report**

The 2009 cohort four-year dropout rate report contains districts/buildings in which students are educated in any high school grades (9th-12th) or when their ages are 14 or older (i.e., students who are eligible to drop out of high school). Like the graduation rate calculation, there are two calculation rules that may result in building rates not summing to district rates, and district rates not summing to state rates:

1. **Court Ordered Facilities:** Buildings in which students who have been ordered by the court to attend are not included in the district's rate, only the building's rate.
2. **"Count Dates":** Michigan collects data on students twice a year on "count dates" (one day in September and one in February) for the purposes of calculating state school aid payments and for required state and federal reporting. Students attending on count day are reported as continuing in the district during a fall or spring submission. Accommodations are made for students who do attend school but were absent on count day (e.g., if a child has an excused absence on count day, he/she must return within 30 school days; if an unexcused absence occurs, the student must return in 10 school days, etc.). In order to ensure that the dropout rate calculation aligns with the MDE's full academic year requirement outlined in the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook, students must be in attendance in a building for at least two count dates (consecutive or not) to be included in that building's calculation. Students must be in attendance at a district for at least one count date to be included in a district's calculations. Students who are enrolled but did not attend on the count dates within the district are only counted in the state rate.

Count Dates Present	Accountability
0	State rate only
1	District and State
2 or more	Building, District and State

### **Reading the 2009 cohort four-year dropout rate report**

The 2009 cohort dropout report includes data for the state, every district, and every building in which students are enrolled sometime during the four-year period, and is divided into six columns. The columns include:

**Table 3**

<b>Column Name</b>	<b>Column Definitions</b>
District/Building Name (Code)	This is the alphabetical listing, beginning with local education agencies (LEAs), then intermediate school districts (ISDs), and then public school academies (PSAs), of the districts and buildings included in the report. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that comprise the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented.
Grades and Settings	These are the grades <u>currently</u> being offered in the building as reported to CEPI in the Educational Entity Master database. These grades do not necessarily match the grades offered to students in the 2009 cohort when they were in this building. Grade ranges are indicated by the number equivalent.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort for the state, for each district, and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out, and exempt students.
Dropouts (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER; missing expected records).
# of High School Grades in School or District	Total number of years a building educated a cohort of students at the end of year 2009.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2009 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2009 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER; missing expected records).

## **Four-Year Graduation Cohort Determination**

### **Determining First-time Ninth Graders**

After identifying current 9th grade students from the most recent Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) data, these students are then located for previous reporting in prior MSDS submissions. If these students are reported in grades lower than 9th grade or not located at all, then they are determined to be first-time 9th graders. Since the state of Michigan has no data on students before their arrival, students who transfer into the state and are reported by the Michigan school district as 9th graders are deemed first-time 9th graders regardless of their status in their previous residence. Students who transfer into the state as 10th through 12th graders are placed in the appropriate cohort as if they are on track for completion in four years, along with their classmates.

### **Calculating the Estimated Graduation Year/Cohort Year (EGY)**

To calculate the EGY, grade and exit status are considered. Below is a chart of the exit status code definitions:

**Table 4**

Exit Status Code	Exit Status Definition	Cohort Status Category
01	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma	Graduated
02	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma and applied to a degree-granting college or university	Graduated
03	Graduated from an alternative program with a regular high school diploma	Graduated
04	Graduated from general education with a regular high school diploma and applied to a non-degree granting institution	Graduated
05	Completed general education with an equivalency certificate (GED)	Other Completer
06	Completed general education with other certificate	Other Completer
07	Dropped out of school	Dropout
08	Enrolled in another public school district in Michigan	If not located, Dropout; if located, Continuing in new district
09	Moved out of state	Exempt
10	Expelled from the school district (no further services)	Dropout
11	Enlisted in military or Job Corps prior to completion	Dropout
12	Deceased	Exempt
13	Incarcerated	Dropout
14	Enrolled in home school	Exempt
15	Enrolled in non-public school	Exempt
16	Unknown	Dropout
17	Placed in a recovery or rehabilitative program	Dropout
18	Left Adult Education	Dropout
19	Expected to continue in the same school district	On-track Continuing or Off-track Continuing, depending on EGY
20	Received Special Education certificate of completion and exited the K-12 system	Other Completer
21	Special Education - Reached maximum age and exited the K-12 system	Other Completer
40	Graduated from a Middle College with both a high school diploma and an Associates Degree or other advanced certificate	Graduated
41	Graduated from a Middle College with only a high school diploma	Graduated
42	Graduated from another district	If not located, Dropout; if located, Graduate in new district

Here are some examples of an EGY with an exit status code of 19:

- If **"Student A"** was reported in 8th grade in the end-of-year (EOY) June 2005 MSDS Submission, a cohort year is not calculated because that student has not reached high school yet. If that same student is then reported in the fall 2005 submission as retained in 8th grade, a

cohort year is still not determined. Likewise, if this student was reported in the EOY 2006 submission in 8th grade, a cohort year will still not be determined, as the student has yet to reach high school. If that same student is then reported in fall 2006 as a first-time 9th grader, the student is assigned to a graduation cohort year of 2010 and is considered on-track.

- If "**Student B**" was reported in 8th grade in the EOY 2005 submission, a cohort year is not calculated because that student has not reached high school yet. If that student is then reported in the fall 2005 submission as retained in 8th grade, a cohort year is still not determined. If that same student is reported in the EOY 2006 submission as a first-time 9th grader, the student is assigned to a graduation cohort year of 2009. If the student is reported in 9th grade in the fall 2006 submission, the student is now off-track. Note that the student would have to be reported as a 10th grader in the fall 2006 submission to be considered on-track (See "**Student C**" example in the table below).
- If "**Student D**" was reported in 8th grade in the EOY 2005 submission, a cohort year is not calculated because that student had not reached high school yet. If that same student is then reported in the fall 2005 submission as a first-time 9th grader, the student is assigned to a graduation cohort year of 2009 and considered on-track. If the student is reported in the fall 2006 submission as retained in 9th grade, the cohort year remains 2009, but now the student is considered off-track.
- If "**Student E**" was reported in 8th grade in the EOY 2005 submission, a cohort year is not calculated because that student had not reached high school yet. If that same student is then reported in the fall 2005 submission as a first-time 9th grader, the student is assigned to a graduation cohort year of 2009 and considered on-track. If the student is reported in the fall 2006 submission in 10th grade, the cohort year remains 2009 and the student remains on-track.
- If "**Student F**" was reported in the EOY 2006 submission as a first-time 9th grader (transferred into Michigan from out of state, from home school, or from non-public school), the student is assigned a graduation cohort year of 2009 with the rest of the on-track 9th grade cohort members and is considered on-track. Note that all first-time transfer students are placed in the appropriate cohort for the on-track students reported with the same grade.

**Table 5**

<b>Academic Year Change Examples</b>										
	<b>MSDS EOY 2005</b>		<b>MSDS Fall 2005</b>			<b>MSDS EOY 2006</b>		<b>MSDS Fall 2006</b>		
	Grade	Cohort Year	Grade	Cohort Year	Cohort Status	Grade	Cohort Year	Grade	Cohort Year	Cohort Status
Student A	8	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	8	N/A	9	2010	On-track
Student B	8	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	9	2009	9	2009	Off-track
Student C	8	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	9	2009	10	2009	On-track
Student D	8	N/A	9	2009	On-track	9	2009	9	2009	Off-track
Student E	8	N/A	9	2009	On-track	9	2009	10	2009	On-track
Student F	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	2009	10	2009	On-track

The initially calculated EGY of a first-time 9th grader is that student's cohort year (the year in which the student must graduate to be considered an on-track four-year graduate). If, in later submission cycles, the EGY is calculated to a later year than his/her cohort year, the student is then considered off-track (see Appendix A for individual student level history examples). To assign the estimated graduation



year/cohort year based on exit status during the four-year period, here are some examples that illustrate the initial assignment of estimated graduation year/cohort year, based on exit status:

- If a student's exit status is 19 and the student is in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12, the student is classified as continuing in school.
- If a student's exit status is 1, 2, 3, or 4 and the school year ending year (e.g., the 2007-2008 school year has an ending year of 2008) is used to submit the exit status, the exit date of the student must be before the fall count date of the next school year (e.g., 2008/09) to be included in the 2008 graduation year. If the exit date is submitted after the fall count date, then the EGY for the student is recalculated to 2009.
- If a student's exit status is not 1, 2, 3, or 4 and the student's grade is 9, 10, 11, or 12, the grade will be used to determine EGY.
- If a student's exit status is not 1, 2, 3, or 4 and the student is not in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 (rather, in an ungraded setting), the calculated age-to-grade conversion formula, used by the Michigan Department of Education for assessment purposes, determines EGY.

### **Calculating the Cohort Status**

The most recently reported exit status by the accountable entity is used to designate a student as graduated, completed, continuing in school, dropout, or exempt. Six categories of students are considered when determining cohort status:

1. On-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less
2. Other completer - earned a GED, certificate, or reached special education maximum age
3. Off-track graduated - completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years
4. Off-track continuing - did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school
5. Dropout - left high school permanently at any time during the four-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown
6. Exempt - transferred out of the public school system (out of state, to non-public school, or home-school) or are deceased

**Table 6**

Status	Corresponding Exit Status	EGY Condition
On-track graduated	1, 2, 3, 4, 40, 41, or 42	EGY is ≤ the cohort year
Other completer	5, 6, 20, or 21	N/A
Off-track graduated	1, 2, 3, 4, 40, 41, or 42	EGY is > the cohort year
Off-track continuing	19	EGY is > the cohort year
Dropout (Reported & MER)	7, 8*, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19*, or 42*	N/A
Exempt (transfer out)	9, 12, 14, 15 or residency codes: 4, 7, 8, or 15	N/A

\* If exit status codes 08, 19, or 42 are used, these usually do not count as a dropout. These are only given a dropout status if the student record is not reported by the new district (08), by the same district (19), or by the graduating district (42) in the subsequent collection. These indicate the student has a missing expected record (MER) and the whereabouts of the student are unknown.

## **Determining Accountable School and District**

To determine accountability for a particular entity (building or district) at a specific point in time, several factors are considered. A building or district must be considered a qualifying school in order to be held accountable for a student. A qualifying school is a school that receives a Michigan High School Report Card, and excludes intermediate school district (ISD) schools, Career and Technical Education (CTE) entities, and Michigan Math/Science Center buildings. If these conditions are met, the building and district are held accountable. Additionally:

- If a student is reported in only one entity for a given MSDS collection cycle, then that is the accountable entity.
- If a student is reported in multiple entities in a collection, the entity in which the greater proportion of full-time equated (FTE) membership is reported is accountable.
- If an exit status for a student other than 08 or 19 (see table 4 above for exit status definitions) is reported, this is considered a terminating exit status and the process assigns accountability to the entity in which the terminating exit status was reported.
- If accountability still cannot be determined from multiple records, the entity that last had accountability retains accountability.
- Accountability status determined from the previous fall and/or spring school year count days is maintained for end-of-year (EOY) and the final fall MSDS submissions unless the EOY submission is a terminal exit status.

## **Data validation and appeals process**

CEPI provided the Graduation/Dropout Review and Comment Application (GAD) for district staff members to review and request changes to graduation and dropout information on individual students. During the spring of 2010, districts' authorized users accessed the GAD to view their cohort members and could request: 1) exit status changes; 2) cohort year changes; and 3) accountability re-points. Linking of multiple students' unique identification codes (UICs) were requested in the MSDS. District authorized users submitting UIC linking requests were able to identify and correct instances in which multiple identifiers (UICs) had been assigned to a single student at some point during the 16 MSDS data collection cycles.

ISD auditors and CEPI staff members approved or denied these requested changes based on evidence provided by districts. Exit status changes potentially resulted in cohort status changes for districts. Cohort year change requests approved for certain students moved students from an incorrectly assigned cohort year to the correct one. Accountability re-points potentially resulted in another district or building being held accountable for a student.

In the 2007 GAD, extensions removed students from their cohort and placed them into the next cohort. For example, students in the 2007 cohort receiving this one-year extension were moved into the 2008 cohort and are not reflected in the 2007 cohort status categories. These extensions were allowed on a case-by-case basis. However, starting in 2008, the fifth-year extension request is no longer available. According to federal regulations released in October 2008, once a student has been placed into a cohort, the student cannot be moved from that cohort. Therefore, this functionality in GAD was disabled and reversed for 2007 cohort students. These students will be reflected in the 2007 five-year rate.

## The Subgroup Report

### Reading the 2009 cohort four-year subgroup report

Subgroups are divided into 3 categories, and are not mutually exclusive. These categories are:

1. Gender - males and females
2. Race - American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN), Asian American, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (H/PI), White, Hispanic or Latino, and Multiracial
3. Program eligibility - economically disadvantaged, limited English proficiency (LEP), migrant, and students with disabilities

The 2009 cohort four-year subgroup rate report includes data for the state, every district, and every building that graduates students and is divided into ten columns. The columns include:

**Table 7**

Column Name	Column Definitions
District Name	This is the alphabetical listing, beginning with the state, and followed by districts included in the report.
Building Name	This is the alphabetical listing of the buildings that make up the district.
Subgroup*	Divided into 3 categories of gender, race, and program eligibility.
2009 Cohort Total**	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort for the state, for each district, and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out, and exempt students.
On-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the four-year cohort period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER; missing expected records).
Off-Track Graduated	Total number of students who completed high school with a regular diploma in more than four years
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in four years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer	Total number of students who earned a GED, other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated over 2009 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2009 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less.

\* Subgroup determination for program eligibility is derived from the prior MSDS count date submission

\*\* < 10 in a cell indicates that there were more than 0 and less than 10 students in the cohort or in a status at the building for two count days or the district for one count day.

## The Cohort Five-Year Graduation and Dropout Rates

Five-year graduation and dropout rates were calculated for students in the 2008 cohort. The five-year graduation rate is calculated in the same manner as the four-year rate, including students who graduated in the fifth year (Off-track graduated) in the numerator. "On-track graduated" and "Off-track graduated" are counted as the numerator and divided by the total count of all status categories (on-track graduated, off-track graduated, off-track continuing, other completer, and dropout). Transfers-in

and out during that fifth year are accounted for as well. The total of the status categories is the 2008 Cohort Total:

$$\frac{\text{On-Track Graduated} + \text{Off-Track Graduated}}{\text{2008 Cohort Total}}$$

The five-year dropout rate is calculated in the same manner as the four-year rate, including those students who dropped out of high school in their fifth year. Transfers-in and out during that fifth year are accounted for as well.

$$\frac{\text{Dropouts}}{\text{2008 Cohort Total}}$$

A building or district's cohort five-year graduation and dropout rates could be greater than, less than, or equal to the cohort four-year rates. There are three reasons for this discrepancy: 1) count dates; 2) the numerator changes; and 3) the denominator changes.

Count dates impact the discrepancy between the four-year and five-year rates. Students who, in their fifth year, now meet the minimum count dates will be included in that district's and/or building's rates. For example, if a 2008 cohort student was at a building for one count date in the 2007-2008 school year, that student was counted in the district rate only. If, in the student's fifth year, that off-track student attended for another count date in the same building, that student is now reflected in the denominator of the building's five-year rates.

According to the federal regulations released in October 2008, states cannot freeze cohorts. Once a cohort has graduated, the cohort total (the denominator used in the graduation and dropout rates) cannot be "locked" at that total. The cohort total must remain "open" to allow for accountability to be placed with the correct entity for students who attend high school beyond the fourth year. Below is a table demonstrating graduation and dropout rate change examples.

**Table 8**

Graduation and Dropout Rate Change Examples				
	4-Year Rate	5-Year Rate	Rate Change	Explanation
Graduation Rate	97%	97%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students graduated in the fifth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change)
	97%	99%	Increases	Off-track continuing students graduated in the fifth year
	97%	95%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the fifth year and are still continuing (increases the denominator)
Dropout Rate	5%	5%	Remains the same	No off-track continuing students dropped out in the fifth year (numerator does not change) and no off-track continuing students transferred in or out (denominator does not change)
	5%	7%	Increases	Off-track continuing students dropped out in the fifth year
	5%	3%	Decreases	Off-track students transferred into the district/building or met the minimum number of count dates in the fifth year and did not drop out (increases the denominator) or former dropouts complete high school (decreases the numerator)

### **Reading the 2008 cohort five-year graduation rate report**

The 2008 cohort five-year graduation rate report includes data for the state, every district, and every building from which students graduate, and is divided into ten columns. The columns include:

**Table 9**

<b>Column Name</b>	<b>Column Definitions</b>
District/Building Name (Code)	This is the alphabetical listing, beginning with local education agencies (LEAs), and then public school academies (PSAs), of the districts and buildings included in the report. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that comprise the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented.
First Time 9th Grade in Fall 2004	Total number of students who were identified as first-time 9th graders in fall 2004, which was the group of students who initially formulated the 2008 cohort.
(+) Transfers In	Total number of students who transferred into the state, district, or building at any time during the five-year period and remained there.
(-) Transfers Out & Exempt	Total number of students who transferred out of the district, building, or public school system (out of state, to non-public school, or home-school) at any time during the five-year period and did not return. Deceased students are also exempt.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2008 cohort for the state, for each district, and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out, and exempt students.
On-Track + Off-Track Graduated	Total number of students in the 2008 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in four years or less, plus those who completed high school with a regular diploma in the fifth year.
Dropout (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the five-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER; missing expected records).
Off-Track Continuing	Total number of students who did not complete high school in five years and are still continuing in school.
Other Completer (GED, etc.)	Total number of students who earned a GED, other certificate, or reached special education maximum age.
Graduation Rate	The percentage, calculated as On-Track Graduated + Off-Track Graduated divided by the 2008 Cohort, of the total number of students in the 2008 cohort who completed high school with a regular diploma in five years or less.

### **Reading the 2008 cohort five-year dropout rate report**

The dropout report includes data for the state, every district, and every building in which students are enrolled sometime during the cohort period, and is divided into six columns. As with the graduation rate report, some building totals will not sum to the district total as the result of court ordered facilities and count dates. The columns include:

**Table 10**

Column Name	Column Definitions
District/Building Name (Code)	This is the alphabetical listing, beginning with local education agencies (LEAs), then intermediate school districts (ISDs), and then public school academies (PSAs), of the districts and buildings included in the report. The district-level data are identified in shaded rows. The buildings that comprise the district appear below the district name in non-shaded rows that are slightly indented.
Grades and Settings	These are the grades <u>currently</u> being offered in the building as reported to CEPI in the Educational Entity Master database. These grades do not necessarily match the grades offered to students in the 2008 cohort when they were in this building. Grade ranges are indicated by the number equivalent.
Cohort	Total number of students in the 2008 cohort for the state, for each district, and for each building after adjustments were made for transfers in, transfers out, and exempt students.
Dropouts (Reported & MER)	Total number of students who left high school permanently at any time during the five-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER; missing expected records).
# of High School Grades in School or District	Total number of years a building educated a cohort of students at the end of year 2008.
Dropout Rate	This is the percentage, calculated as Dropouts divided by the 2008 Cohort Total, of the total number of students in the 2008 cohort who left high school permanently at any time during the five-year period, or whose whereabouts are unknown (MER; missing expected records).

## Appendix A

### Individual Student Level History Examples

The following examples show the final cohort status of individual students based on their historical MSDS records. All example students end up counting toward the fictional Happy Valley Schools' rates.

#### On Track – Graduated: Pat Johnson

SRSD Cycle	District Name	Building Name	Grade	Expected Grad. Year	Cohort Year	Exit Status	Exit Date
EOY 2009	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	12	2009	2009	01	6/1/2009
Spring 2009	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	12	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	12	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2005	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	

#### On Track – Graduated as transfer-in: Pat Johnson

SRSD Cycle	District Name	Building Name	Grade	Expected Grad. Year	Cohort Year	Exit Status	Exit Date
EOY 2009	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	12	2009	2009	01	6/1/2009
Spring 2009	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	12	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	12	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2007	Old Community Schools	Old High School	11	2009	2009	08	8/25/2007
EOY 2007	Old Community Schools	Old High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2007	Old Community Schools	Old High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2006	Old Community Schools	Old High School	10	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2006	Old Community Schools	Old High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2006	Old Community Schools	Old High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2005	Old Community Schools	Old High School	09	2009	2009	19	

**Off Track – Continuing (retained in 11th grade): Pat Johnson**

SRSD Cycle	District Name	Building Name	Grade	Expected Grad. Year	Cohort Year	Exit Status	Exit Date
Fall 2009	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	12	2010	2009	19	
EOY 2009	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2010	2009	19	
Spring 2009	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2010	2009	19	
Fall 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2010	2009	19	
EOY 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	11	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2005	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	

**Dropped – Reported: Pat Johnson**

SRSD Cycle	District Name	Building Name	Grade	Expected Grad. Year	Cohort Year	Exit Status	Exit Date
Spring 2008	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2010	2009	07	12/14/2007
Fall 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2010	2009	19	
EOY 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2007	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	10	2009	2009	19	
EOY 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Spring 2006	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	
Fall 2005	Happy Valley Schools	Happy High School	09	2009	2009	19	